

GOSSIP OF NEW YORK

Some Odd Features of Life in the American Metropolis.

THE LATEST BOWERY PLAY

SERIOUSLY FUNNY AND DEALS WITH THE FAR WEST.

Fake Brutality of the Six-Day Bicycle Race—Newspaper Schemes to Arouse Interest in the Event—“American” Paper to Be Started in London—James Gordon Bennett’s Kindness.

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New York, Dec. 18.—A week ago, dating from the moment when this will reach your eyes, you were undoubtedly shaking your head sadly over the brutalities of the great New York bicycle race and wondering why the authorities of our city permitted such a horrible thing to go on unmolested. Well, now that the affair is over, I don't mind saying that, like nearly everything that creates any stir in New York, there was a good deal of fake about the big bicycle contest and the sufferings of those who took part. We have had so many of these affairs here before that when this one began the public took very little interest in it—so little, in fact, that an evening newspaper which had begun an elaborate system of all-day extras, found its “return” coming back to the counting room in alarming quantities, while the attendance at the Garden was not such as to satisfy the managers. Then the papers began to clutter with stories of the horrible physical sufferings of the participants, and artists were employed to depict the agonized faces of the riders, who were described as falling from their machines from sheer exhaustion, and being driven back to the track by the blows of brutal trainers. Then people began to stop their friends on the street to tell them what they had heard about the human suffering at the Garden, and straightway thousands of intelligent, highly cultivated men and women left their comfortable homes and chilly firesides to invade the foul, smoky air of the great building and see for themselves what the wheelmen were going through. The receipts swelled with the spend of these stories, and the “extras” sold like the hot cakes of tradition. The public attitude toward the race changed from one of apathy to that of intense and constantly deepening interest, and as a topic of discussion it led all others. The air was filled with rumors of riders who were taking cocaine and of others who were going to be poisoned. Later in the week, these stories having worn

themselves out, the need of something stronger was felt, and it was gravely announced that one of the riders had to be rescued from his lethargy and forced again to his task by charges of electricity, administered by his trainers. An additional fillip to the gate receipts was administered on Thursday, when the police, who have never been known to lose a cent by an affair of this sort, compelled four riders to desist. It was noticed that they did not take either Miller or Rice, who were in the lead at that time, off the track. I spent an hour in the Garden, on the lookout for cases of brutality and awful human suffering, but it seemed to me that the riders were in a very fair physical state, considering the awful monotony of their work, and I have never seen more persistent eating and drinking than that of which they were capable.

A SERIOUSLY FUNNY PLAY.

The Bowery has always boasted of a school of drama that is peculiarly its own, and runs largely to noisily thrilling effects, the noblest of virtues and the darkest of vices. A few nights ago I paid a visit to the People's theatre, which is situated in the very heart of the whole Bowery region, and there saw a play called “Madeline of Fort Reno,” which is worth writing about because it is a typical east-side melodrama, and one that offers us not only stirring entertainment, but also an opportunity to study the conditions of life which prevail in a frontier military post.

The heroine of this border drama is named Madeline Hartman, and although she has two or three changes of raiment, she lives principally in a violet velvet riding habit surmounted by a hat with a long feather. She is loved by Jack Curley, described on the programme as “an educated half-breed,” but Jack does not look to me like a man of scholarly attainments, or one given to the midnight study of Kant and Schlegel. He reminds me rather of a fat man of the variety encountered at Rhode Island clambakes—the sort of a man who is selected to play on third base when the fat men meet the thin ones in a Fourth of July game of baseball on the village green. But Mr. Curley possesses many noble attributes besides his flesh and bone so quick to recognize them as General Custer, who promotes him from the rank of half-breed to that of captain of cavalry in place of the villain, who is degraded because he is fat and false.

The first act shows the characters assembled inside the post. There is a portion of the United States army, including those inevitable attachments, a comic Dutch soldier and an equally humorous black one, besides a Hebrew rum seller made up in imitation of Mr. Frank Bush. Madeline arrives upon the scene and so does the noble half-breed, who has once before shown his devotion by steady and daring. He is surrounded by hostile Indians, and making his way into the desert to procure a cornucopia of sand that Madeline might cheer the downcast troops by a scene and dance.

A crash of music from the band and Bernadine Banks bounds upon the stage in a blonde wig, military cap, short skirt and black stockings. Like all other military organizations, this troop of cavalry is addicted to specialties, and when a small boy wanders in upon the scene and explains that he

had been abandoned by a minstrel company, and is now in search of his father's grave, we know what is coming. He sings a song, and is rewarded by instant promotion to the rank of major, though I thought at first he was likely to be sentenced to the Elmira reformatory, there to remain until his voice changed.

Other specialties follow that of the boy minstrel, and then the Princess Moonlight rides in mounted on one of the 27 horses that are advertised as taking part in the drama. I don't know where all these horses are—possibly they are ridden by the Indians who are hovering about the stockade just out of rifle shot. Four of these beasts may be seen tethered to a rope, watching with disconsolate faces the specialties with which the soldiers cheer at their hearts. I don't think they have long to live, and it may be that they are the last survivors of the brave band of 27.

The Princess Moonlight is an interesting young thing in leggings, who has led a romantic, untrammelled life. In the shooting galleries of the far west, the clay pigeons of the plains know her well as an unerring shot. The glass balls skurry away into the grass when she takes up her rifle. The endless chain of strange birds and beasts that keep up their everlasting journey around the targets move at a swifter pace when she appears at the mouth of the gallery. The sharp clang of the bull's eye attests her skill whenever her weapon is discharged. Her belt is hung with the unspeakable clars that she has taken from the Indians. Often, in the stillness of the summer night, sharp reports of her repeating rifle startles the sleeping Apaches to their feet, and then they smile proudly as they sink once more into slumber for they know that it is the Princess Moonlight who has fired three shots for 5 cents.

The commanding officer is about to imprison her in a dungeon, when Jack Curley, who has ridden into his post on a brown plush horse brushed the wrong way, urges him to let the princess try her skill with a rifle, and straightway a target appears in the heavens and the sharpshooting specially goes merrily on.

The second act shows us the home of John Hartman, who is stretched on a couch at the right of the stage in an attitude that betokens speedy dissolution. I can always tell when a sick man in a play is going to die, and I will back my judgment against that of any stage doctor who ever felt a pulse or looked at an open-faced gold watch in the interest of medical science.

When I first saw Mr. Hartman I shook my head sadly, for I did not think he would survive the full of another curtain, but his naturally hard constitution and the store of robust health that has come to him through a life spent mostly in the open air served to prolong his existence until the fourth act, when he goes mad and dies, just in time to go off and change his clothes for those of Lieutenant Dare, into whom his mortal spirit passes for the duties of the fifth act—for they still double up in some of our traveling organizations.

Mr. Hartman lives in a humble home in company with his daughter Mrs. Hartman and a pet lion of several years' standing. The lion, in this aspect, who inhabits a cage in the back of the room, while the daughter goes about her simple domestic duties in a

white muslin something which looks to my untutored eye like a cross between a Mother Hubbard and an Empire gown. The lion, he explains, was bequeathed to him by his dying wife, who had been very fond of it. She had brought it up from cub-hood in the hope that it would learn to do specialties, but the faithful animal, deeply impressed with the sorrow which such idle amusements have wrought in the United States army, has always remained true to a higher ideal and refused to do any sharp-shooting or dancing, or even to pour sand on the stage for the other entertainments. In the solitude of his cage he thinks sadly of the song and dance crimes that have been committed within his range of vision.

The wicked captain comes to John Hartman's home with a squad of soldiers, who promptly try the helpless invalid by court-martial, and find him guilty and sentence him to be shot at sunrise. Jack Curley hastens away to secure a reprieve, and while he is gone Madeline is induced to “sign his death warrant,” the prerogative of all young women who sweep the plains in velvet riding habits, in order that she may save her father's life.

In the third act the two comic soldiers are captured by the Apache Indians, who are a serious-minded lot and rigidly opposed to specialties of any description. They tie their captives to trees and are about to put them to the torture when the sudden arrival of General Custer and his troops saves them from a bad end. This scene, however, should serve as a warning to a great many victims of the specialty habit who are now in town, and if the management of this entertainment desires to give a professional matinee I will tell them where to place some of their tickets.

The fourth act shows the death of Hartman, the degradation of the wicked captain and the promotion of the fat, scholarly and virtuous half-breed.

In the fifth act General Custer makes his last gallant stand and perishes beside the brown plush horse. This dies the best actor in the company, while the comic people, Princess Moonlight, and the beautiful Madeline, most of whom deserve death, escape the massacre in order to appear at the very close of the piece in what is known technically as an apotheosis, by which is meant something like the posthumous appearance of Little Eva, Uncle Tom and Abraham Lincoln in a nocturne of cotton clouds at the finish of “Uncle Tom's Cabin.”

MOST TALKED-OF PERSON.

It is interesting to keep tab on the popular mind by finding out from time to time whom the people are talking about the most and I have noticed that, as a general thing, the American public occupies itself with some utterly trivial or unworthy person and seems to have very little interest in the achievements of our men of letters and sciences. For steady diet, however, royalty engrosses our attention to a surprising degree and I happen to know that more columns of matter are printed annually about Queen Victoria, the Prince of Wales and the emperor of Germany than any other individual on the earth, our own president alone excepted.

A friend of mine, who makes a business of clipping from newspapers all references to such men and women as

are before the public, is my authority for this statement, but when I asked him yesterday to give me the name of the most printed about person in the United States, he surprised me by replying: “Miss Harriet B. Richardson of Kentucky, who wanted to christen a new battleship.”

After careful consideration of the case, however, I saw no reason to doubt his statement, for a pretty girl and a bottle of 45-year-old whisky of a brand that commands the respect and confidence of the entire community, is a combination that is very hard for the American public to resist.

KINDNESS OF MR. BENNETT.

I believe that the affairs of newspaperdom possess an interest for the general public second only to those of the stage, and this is my only excuse for speaking of one or two matters that have lately come to my knowledge.

In the first place, Mr. James Gordon Bennett, who, not long ago, cabled to his staff in this country to suspend the publication of the Evening Telegram, and then rescinded the order two days later, is said to have shown a remarkable degree of human feeling at the time of the illness and death of Mr. John B. Jackson, an old and faithful writer who had grown gray in the service of the Herald in all parts of the world, having acted as a musical critic and foreign editor in New York, as a war correspondent in the Balkans, and as special commissioner across the frozen plains of Siberia, whither he journeyed to meet the survivors of the lost “Jedette.” Mr. Jackson died in Paris, where he was employed on Mr. Bennett's Paris Herald, and I am told that “The Great White Chief,” as the newspaper proprietor is termed by his subordinates, personally tended the sick man during his illness, and secured for him the best doctors that could be found, and did all that he could to alleviate his sufferings. I will venture to say that these tidings will create considerable excitement when they reach Park Row and Herald Square.

AMERICAN PAPER IN LONDON.

It is a matter of gossip here that certain Americans are turning their faces toward London with the intention of establishing a daily newspaper there, to be conducted on the American plan. I do not know the names of the men interested in this project, but I am told that they are not altogether unknown in Park Row, and I have no doubt that they have been influenced by the success of the London Mail, which has already won for itself a circulation of about 100,000 copies, and cut into the circulation of both the Telegraph and the Chronicle.

It is interesting for us in New York to know that the managing editor of this paper, and the man who is said to be largely responsible for its success, is a young gentleman named S. J. Prior, who was for many years a member of the Sun staff in this city, and went to London a little more than a year ago to fill a subordinate place in the office of Julius Ralph, who was at that time the Sun's correspondent in the British capital. Mr. Prior is an extremely quiet and modest young man who, although thoroughly faithful in the discharge of his duties on the Sun, was never regarded as one of the great men of Park Row. I have always believed that Park Row was the place for the building up of a good many false reputations for ability; I am told

Too Bad!

The makers of Pride of Japan (tree tea) have advertised that Thos. Price, analytical chemist of San Francisco, and Prof. J. T. Kingsbury of the University of Utah, have given them certificates that the above brand of tea is perfectly pure.

The deduction drawn from this analysis is, that the Pride of Japan tea which you buy in the stores is perfectly pure.

While it is quite possible to buy pure tea (like Schilling's Best) and pack it in Pride of Japan packages, and submit it to chemists for analysis; still we assert that the Pride of Japan tea sold in this market is artificially colored with coloring matter.

We don't know how these endorsements were secured; but it is a pity that the names of such eminent authorities should be used to back up statements made in the advertisements of Pride of Japan.

Schilling's Best tea is not only guaranteed pure, but it is such tea as you would drink yourself if you knew all about it.

Besides it is money-back, and that is backing enough in the long run.

San Francisco

A Schilling & Company

that he has closely followed the Sun model of a dozen years ago in his management of the Mail, and that the paper is read by every clever and “ny” inhabitant of the town. It is difficult to predict the sort of a sensation that a paper representing the latest ideas in what is termed “New Journalism” would create, if it were

transplanted to staid and dignified London.

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Combination bookcase and secretary. Fine oak, 5 ft. 10 inches high, 3 ft. wide, 12x12 French plate pattern plate mirror, has secretary, 1 large cupboard, bookcase, adjustable shelves, a marvel at \$20.00, cut down to—

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BARGAIN NO. 3.
Bookcase, Int. Mahogany, Inlaid Marquetry work, glass door front, 2 ft. 5 in. wide, 5 ft. 3 in. high, adjustable shelves, an exceptionally good value at \$17.50, cut down to—

\$10.33

BARGAIN NO. 4.
China Closet, select quartered oak, 5 ft. 11 in. high, 3 ft. 8 in. wide, 14x16 French plate mirror, adjustable shelves; 9x17 oval French plate pattern shaped mirror, good bargain at \$32.50, cut down to—

\$20.95

BARGAIN NO. 5.
Secretary, made in choicest bird's-eye maple, 8x12 French plate oval bevel mirror, stands 8 ft. 4 in. high, door nicely carved, fancy shaped bent legs—A dainty piece of furniture, high grade in every respect; sells itself at \$25.00; cut down to—

\$17.15

BARGAIN NO. 6.
Dressing table, made in most select bird's-eye maple, with 18x23 French plate pattern shaped mirror, would delight any young lady, competitors ask \$20.00; cut down to—

\$13.58

BARGAIN NO. 7.
Bookcase, choicest quartered oak, 2 glass doors, artistic designs, rope design, side and front, heavily carved, 5 ft. 6 in. high, 4 ft. 11 in. wide; will make a handsome Xmas gift. Regular price, \$27.00; cut down to—

\$18.15

BARGAIN NO. 8.
Chiffonier, white enamel, 14x24 French plate mirror, top 20x32—very roomy; has 3 large drawers— is a bargain at \$22.00; cut down to—

\$14.70

BARGAIN NO. 9.
Dresser, white enamel top, 20x45; French plate oval mirror, 24x30. Swelled top drawers—never sold for less than \$27.50; cut down to—

\$18.13

BARGAIN NO. 10.
Arm Rocker, mahogany, upholstered, back and seat, covered in French velvet, greatest value at \$7.50; cut down to—

\$4.15

BARGAIN NO. 11.
Dresser Toilet, in white enamel, a suitable present for a young lady, greatest value at \$13.50; cut down to—

\$8.35

BARGAIN NO. 12.
Brass Standard Dresser Toilet, in White Enamel, finest finish, hand-painted front and top, French bevel plate oval mirror, a perfect dream; regular price, \$22.00; cut down to—

\$15.50

BARGAIN NO. 13.
Dresser, bird's-eye maple, choicest panels, top, 22x47; 24x30 French plate pattern plate mirror; full serpentine front, a perfect dream. Regular value, \$35.00; cut down to—

\$24.95

BARGAIN NO. 14.
Bookcase, choice oak (a gift worth having), 2 glass doors, front, 5 ft. 4 in. high, 3 ft. 2 in. wide, adjustable shelves, regular value, \$13.50; cut down to—

\$8.65

BARGAIN NO. 15.
Iron Bed, white enamel, full size, will beautify any bedroom, greatest value at \$6.50; cut down to—

\$3.95

BARGAIN NO. 16.
Center Table, bird's-eye maple—fancy shape, round top, finest finish—a perfect dream. Regular price, \$9.00; marked down to—

\$4.85

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BARGAIN NO. 17.
Dining-room Chair, cane seat, first-class style, good value at \$1.00; marked marked down to—

\$1.70

BARGAIN NO. 18.
Large Oak Center Table, fine finish, good style; regular value, \$2.75; marked down to—

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Chiffonier, maple, has a large drawers, hat-box, finest finish, one of the neatest designs put on the floor; regular value, \$16.50; cut down to—

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Largest Size Willow Arm Rocker, elegant style; a wonder at \$7.50; reduced to—

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